

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Memorial Hall

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

West Fairmount Park

CITY, TOWN

Philadelphia

VICINITY OF  
CODE

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd

STATE

Pennsylvania

COUNTY

Philadelphia

CODE

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☒ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☒ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☒ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☒ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME The City of Philadelphia

STREET &amp; NUMBER

City Hall

CITY, TOWN

Philadelphia

VICINITY OF

STATE

Pennsylvania

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Department of Records

STREET &amp; NUMBER

City Hall

CITY, TOWN

Philadelphia

STATE

Pennsylvania

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Philadelphia Historical Commission Survey

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

1313 City Hall Annex

CITY, TOWN

Philadelphia

STATE

Pennsylvania

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT  
☒ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED  
☒ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

"Memorial Hall, the Art Gallery of 1876, is the only major structure of the Centennial which still stands. It is also a building of major architectural and historic significance. The official description, written by the architect, cannot be improved:

'The structure is located on a line parallel with, and northward of, the Main Building. It is elevated on a terrace six feet above the general level of the plateau, the plateau itself being an eminence 112 feet above the surface of the Schuylkill River. The entire structure is in the modern Renaissance. The materials are granite, glass, and iron. No wood is used in the construction, and the building is thoroughly fire-proof. The structure is 365 feet in length, 210 feet in width, and 59 feet in height, over a spacious basement 112 feet high, surmounted by a dome.

The main front looks southward, and displays three distinctive features:

First. A main entrance in the centre of the structure, consisting of three colossal arched doorways of equal dimensions.

Second. A pavilion at each end.

Third. Two arcades connecting the pavilions with the centre.

The central section is 95 feet long, 72 feet high; pavilions, 45 feet long, 60 feet high; arcades, each 90 feet long, 40 feet high.

The front of south face of the central section displays a rise of thirteen steps to the entrance, 70 feet wide. The entrance is by three arched doorways, each 40 feet high and 15 feet wide, opening into a hall. Between the arches of the doorways are clustered columns terminating in emblematic designs illustrative of Science and Art...The main cornice is surmounted by a balustrade with candelabras. At either end are allegorical figures representing Science and Art. The dome rises from the centre of the structure to the height of 150 feet from the ground. It is of glass and iron, and of a unique design; it terminates in a colossal bell from which the figure of Columbia rises. A group of colossal size stands at each corner of the base of the dome. These figures typify Industry and Commerce on the South front, and Agriculture and Mining on the north front. Each pavilion displays a window 30 feet high and 12 feet wide; it is also ornamented with 13 stars in the frieze, a highly-ornamented cresting, and a colossal eagle at each of its four corners.<sup>1</sup> The arcades, a general feature in the old

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1. The cresting and eagles have been removed.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1876

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Herman Schwartzmann

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Memorial Hall in west Fairmount Park is the only surviving large building left from the 1876 Centennial Exhibition. Perhaps the most successful world's fair (it actually made money) the celebration was a heady one. America had survived civil strife, a presidential assassination and the catharsis of emancipation and now prepared for a birthday celebration with elaborate patriotic iconography.

In 1874, there were three completed art museums in the country (New Haven, Hartford, and the Corcoran in Washington) and two unfinished (Boston and the Metropolitan in New York). Memorial Hall was the most pretentious of the lot in concept. Herman Joseph Schwartzmann was only 30 years old in 1876 and had already been the designer of the development of Fairmount Park, the largest and finest urban park in America.

When the Centennial Commission was established an architectural competition was held, entries arrived from eleven States and the District of Columbia (all records are today in the archives in City Hall). Due to a depression and short funds, the completion was scrapped and Schwartzmann was appointed architect-planner.

"In just under two years Schwarzmann had transformed 285 acres of fields, swamps and ravines into building lots, gardens and landscaped grounds. The work force under his command had moved over 500,000 cubic yards of earth; graded and surfaced 3 miles of avenues and 17 miles of walks; built a railroad with 5-1/2 miles of double track; erected 16 bridges; put up 3 miles of fence with 179 stiles and gates; constructed 7 miles of drains, 9 miles of water pipes, 16 fountains, and water works with a daily pumping capacity of 6 million gallons; laid 8 miles of gas pipes; installed three separate telegraph systems with underground cables; planted 153 acres of lawns and flower beds, and over 20,000 trees and shrubs. Every one of 249 large and small structures was completed; Schwarzmann had designed 34 of these himself, including the two permanent buildings, Horticultural Hall and Memorial Hall.

Memorial Hall was the first American art museum in the Beaux-Arts manner, the first of many. For decades, a symmetrical new edifice with center and corner pavilions, triple portals, coupled columns, niches and statues, with or without dome, signified "art museum." <sup>1</sup>

1. Maass, John, The Glorious Enterprise, American Life Foundation, Watkins Glen, New York, 1973, p. 40, 52.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Maass, John, The Glorious Enterprise, American Life Foundation, Watkins Glen, New York, 1975
2. City Hall Archives, City Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 3 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	8
4	8,2
1	0,0

4	4	2	5
2	7	0	

B 




C 




D 




VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The national historic landmark boundary follows the inside curb (nearest the building) of the driveway which encircles Memorial Hall.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian

August 2, 1976

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service, Historic Sites Survey

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street, NW.

TELEPHONE

523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington,

STATE

D. C. 20240

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL \_\_\_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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Memorial Hall

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Roman villas, but entirely novel here,<sup>2</sup> are intended to screen the long walls of the gallery. They each consist of five groined arches; these arcades form promenades looking outward over the grounds, and inward over open gardens, which extend back to the main wall of the building. These garden-plats are each 90 feet long and 36 feet deep, and are designed for the display of statuary and fountains.<sup>3</sup> A stairway...reaches the upper line of the arcades, forming a second promenade, 35 feet above the ground. Its balustrade is ornamented with vases, and is designed ultimately for statues. The cornices, the atticas, and other cresting throughout are highly ornamented. The walls of the east and west sides of the structure display the pavilions and the walls of the picture-galleries, and are relieved by five niches designed for statues;<sup>4</sup> the frieze is richly ornamented above it; the central dome shows to great advantage.

The rear or north front is of the same general character as the main front, but in place of the arcade is a series of arched windows, twelve in number, with an entrance in the centre; in all thirteen openings above, in an unbroken line, extending the entire length of the structure; between the pavilions is the grand balcony, a promenade 275 feet long and 45 feet wide, and elevated 40 feet above the ground, overlooking northward the whole panorama of the Park grounds.

The main entrance opens on a hall 82 feet long, 60 feet wide and 53 feet high, decorated in the modern Renaissance style; on the farther side of the hall three doorways, each 16 feet wide and 25 feet high, open into the centre hall; this hall is 83 feet square, the ceiling of the dome rising over it 80 feet in height. From its east and west sides extend the galleries, each 98 feet long, 84 feet wide, and 35 feet in height.

These galleries admit of temporary divisions for the more advantageous display of paintings. The central hall and galleries form one grand hall 287 feet long and 85 feet wide, capable of holding 8000 persons-nearly twice the dimensions of the largest hall in the country. From the two galleries doorways open into two smaller galleries, 28 feet wide and 89 feet long. These open north and south into

2. Open arcades were indeed rare in the United States. Independence Hall in Philadelphia had two brick arcades from ca. 1750 to 1812. (These were reconstructed in 1896). Washington's home, Mount Vernon, had small wooden arcades, built ca. 1775.

3. The arcades were later glassed, and the garden courts were roofed over to form two additional galleries.

4. No statues were ever placed in these niches.

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private apartments, which connect with the pavilion-rooms, forming two side galleries 210 feet long. Along the whole length of the north side of the main galleries and central hall extends a corridor 14 feet wide, which opens on its north line into a series of private rooms, thirteen in number, designed for studios and smaller exhibition-rooms.

All the galleries and the central hall are lighted from above; the pavilions and studios are lighted from the sides. The pavilions and central hall are designed especially for exhibition of sculpture.<sup>5</sup>

The cost of Memorial Hall was \$1,564,398.56, little more than the sums which had been appropriated in advance by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (\$1,000,000) and the City of Philadelphia (\$500,000).

Two colossal bronze groups, Pegasus tamed by the Muses Erato and Calliope, were placed on the terrace in front of the main entrance. These had been designed by Vincenz Pilz for the facade of the Imperial Opera House in Vienna, whence they were removed in 1870 after a newspaper campaign.<sup>6</sup> The Austrian government ordered them to be melted down but the foundry owner obtained permission to sell the groups. A travelling Philadelphian, Robert H. Gratz of the philanthropic Jewish family, bought the colossal bronzes in Vienna. He had them shipped to Philadelphia, probably the largest souvenir brought home by an American tourist until William Randolph Hearst imported a Spanish cloister in the nineteen twenties.

Gratz offered the winged horses to the Commissioners of Fairmount Park who were pleased to accept them. The winged horses were set up near the Park Commission's offices in 1871, awaiting a greater opportunity. In 1876 they were permanently placed in front of Memorial Hall where they have weathered to an attractive green patina.<sup>7</sup>

The new institution opened on the first anniversary of the Centennial, May 10th, 1877. After the Philadelphia Museum of Art completed its much larger Grecian building in 1928, Memorial Hall continued to house the less important collections. In 1954, Memorial Hall was closed as a museum and turned back to the Park Commission.

5. H.J. Schwarzmunn, "Report of the Chief Engineer, etc." in U.S. Centennial Commission; International Exhibition of 1876; Report of the Director-General, Philadelphia, 1879.
6. They were replaced on the Vienna Opera with another pair of winged horses by Ernst Julius Hahnel. Pairs of Pegasus tamers were also on the Old Museum in Berlin and the Opera in Paris.
7. Maass, John, The Glorious Enterprise, America Life Foundation, Watkins Glen, New York, 1975, p. 44-46.

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The building stood vacant for four years, and rain seeping through the dome damaged the interior. In 1958, the City of Philadelphia commissioned the architectural firm Hatfield, Martin & White to study adaptation of Memorial Hall to new community uses. Their imaginative plans were carried out over a period of ten years, at a cost of \$1,500,000. Memorial Hall was re-dedicated in January 1969. The East Gallery has been converted into an indoor swimming pool, and the West Gallery into a basketball court. The smaller rooms serve as the offices of the Fairmount Park Commission which administers one of the largest urban park systems in the world. The central hall with its translucent dome, inlaid marble floor and creamy Victorian stucco work, has been handsomely restored. The "Great Hall" --still one of America's most impressive interior spaces--is now the scene of civic events. Memorial Hall will also play a part in the United States Bicentennial in 1976."<sup>8</sup>

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8. Ibid p. 49.

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Photographs and Their Descriptions

Location: Memorial Hall, Philadelphia, Pa.

Photo credit: Bernie Cleff

Photo: 1. Front

2. Pegasus

3. Roof - "Arts"